



PRESS NOTICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THREE PLEAD TO EDUCATION LOAN FRAUD

Columbia, South Carolina ---- United States Attorney Bill Nettles stated today that SHELLEY MAE GRAHAM, age 44, of Cades, South Carolina, ANTHONY HICKSON, age 30, of Olanta, South Carolina, and TERATA WASHINGTON FLOYD, age 52, of Coward, South Carolina, pled guilty today in federal court in Florence, South Carolina, to conspiracy to commit wire fraud and education loan fraud, a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371. United States District Judge R. Bryan Harwell of Florence, South Carolina, accepted the pleas and will impose sentences after he has reviewed the presentence reports which will be prepared by the U.S. Probation Office.

Evidence presented at the change of plea hearing established that Graham, Hickson, and Floyd conspired to make an agreement with other co-defendants to enroll at an online school to make it appear they would be attending classes. A Federal Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) was submitted on: Aril 6, 2010, on behalf of Hickson, June 22,

2010, on behalf of Graham, and June 26, 2010, on behalf of Floyd. Federal Financial Aid was awarded to Graham, Hickson, and Floyd, and sent to their schools, with the excess funds being sent to them. They provided their personal information to a co-defendant to be enrolled in school with the purpose of receiving the money.

Mr. Nettles stated the maximum penalty the defendants can receive is a fine of \$250,000.00 and/or imprisonment for 5 years, plus a special assessment of \$100.00.

The case was investigated by agents of the Department of Education, Office of Inspector General, and agents of the United States Secret Service. Assistant United States Attorney William E. Day, II, of the office handled the case.

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